

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 OSLO 2958

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SW, FI, DA, IC, NATO, NO
SUBJECT: PM NORTHERN FLANK STUDY

REF: A) STATE 102676, B) STOCKHOLM 1999, C) USNATO 4788

SUMMARY: THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR COMMENTS ON PM'S VERY WORTHWHILE
AND TIMELY STUDY OF THE NORTHERN FLANK. OUR SUGGESTIONS ARE
DIRECTED LARGELY TOWARD THE POSSIBLE DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS OF THE
IMPORTANCE OF THE NORTH (BY THE USSR, US/ALLIES) AND ON THE
REINFORCEMENT SITUATION WHICH WE FEEL IS PORTRAYED IN OVERLY
OPTIMISITC TERMS. END SUMMARY.

1. WE THINK THAT THE STUDY IS AN EXCELLENT IDEA AS IT DOES
TWO THINGS WHICH ARE LONG OVERDUE: 1) IT DRAWS TOGETHER A
NUMBER OF RELATED POLITICAL/MILITARY STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC
STRANDS AND ATTEMPTS TO WEAVE A COHERENT WHOLE THAT COULD LEAD
TO THOUGHTFUL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USG POLICY OPTIONS TOWARDS
SCANDINAVIA AND 2) IT FOCUSES USG ATTENTION ON THE NORTHERN FLANK,

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AN AREA OF INCREASING IMPORTANCE TO THE ALLIANCE AND TO THE UNITED
STATES AND AN AREA WHICH HAS UNTIL RECENTLY BEEN TAKEN
FOR GRANTED. WE AGREE WITH THE THRUST OF THE PAPER AND
WITH ITS MAJOR CONCLUSION THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD
NOT MAKE ANY RADICAL CHANGES IN ITS POLICY TOWARDS NORWAY.
THE COMMENTS WHICH FOLLOW ARE CONFINED TO THE PORTIONS
OF THE PAPER DEALING WITH NORWAY AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS

TO THE ALLIANCE, TO THE UNITED STATES AND TO THE SOVIET UNION AND ARE INTENDED TO SHARPEN, PARE AND OCCASIONALLY CORRECT THE TEXT OF AN OTHERWISE EXCELLENT DRAFT.

2. POLITICAL/STRATEGIC PERCEPTIONS - THE PM PAPER MAKES AN IMPORTANT INTRODUCTORY POINT WHICH IN OUR VIEW IS SOMETIMES OVERLOOKED -- NAMELY THAT THERE IS A STRUCTURAL ASYMMETRY IN THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE NORTHERN FLANK TO THE US/NATO AND TO THE SOVIET UNION. WHILE FOR THE ALLIANCE THE NORTHERN FLANK COULD PROBABLY BE DEFINED AS QUOTE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT UNQUOTE FOR THE SOVIET UNION (AND NORWAY) IT IS CLEARLY QUOTE VITAL. UNQUOTE THIS ASYMMETRY MAY BECOME MORE PRONOUNCED IF AS THE STUDY IMPLIES THE DYNAMICS OF THE SALT PROCESS DRIVE THE SOVIETS TO DISPLACE MORE OF THEIR STRATEGIC SYSTEMS FROM LAND TO SEA BASED PLATFORMS. THE LATTER WOULD PRESUMABLY LARGELY BE DEPLOYED WITH THE NORTHERN FLEET IN THE KOLA PENINSULA.

3. WHAT PERHAPS COULD BE SHARPENED IN THE STUDY IS THE SOVIET UNION'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE STATUS QUO IN THE NORTHERN REGION. THE PAPER ASSUMES THAT THE SOVIETS, LIKE US, DO NOT SEEK REVISIONS IN THE NORDIC SECURITY SITUATION. YET THE PAPER CLEARLY SPELLS OUT HOW THE SOVIETS' MILITARY INTERESTS IN THE NORTH HAVE GROWN OVER THE YEARS AND PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

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AFTER UNDERSCORING MOSCOW'S INCREASING MILITARY/STRATEGIC STAKE IN THE NORTH, (P. 9) THE PAPER CONCLUDES THAT THE SOVIETS WILL BE CONTENT WITH THE POLITICAL STATUS QUO. IT MIGHT BE EQUALLY FAIR TO ASSUME THAT AS THE SOVIETS' MILITARY INTEREST INCREASES THEY WILL SEEK CONCOMITANT CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL SITUATION TO PROTECT THEIR GROWING VESTED INTEREST (AS REFLECTED, FOR EXAMPLE IN KOSYGIN'S DECEMBER HECTORING OF THE NORWEGIANS IN HELSINKI). INDEED THE STUDY MAKES A PERSUASIVE CASE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN PRESSING TO CHANGE THE POLITICAL/MILITARY BALANCE IN THE NORTHERN AREA (SEE PAGES 9 AND 10). IN SUM, THERE APPEAR TO BE GOOD REASONS FOR THE SOVIETS TO WORK TO CHANGE THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH MORE TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. IT WOULD SEEM DESIREABLE THEREFORE TO WORK IN SOME DISCUSSION TO THIS EFFECT IN THE PAPER. IF THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS OF THE SOVIETS WORKING TOWARDS CHANGING THE POLITICAL/MILITARY SITUATION IN THE NORTH MORE TO THEIR ADVANTAGE THEN OF COURSE THE UNITED STATES WOULD SIMILARLY HAVE TO ADJUST ITS POLICIES TO MEET THE CHANGED SITUATION.

4. THERE IS A PARADOXICAL ASPECT OF THE SOVIET FORCE LEVELS IN THE KOLA PENINSULA WHICH COULD BE DEALT WITH,

TOO. AS THE SOVIET FORCES INCREASE THEIR
IMPORTANCE TO MOSCOW (ESPECIALLY TO THEIR STRATEGIC SYSTEMS),
THESE FORCES REPRESENT QUOTE A HOSTAGE UNQUOTE AGAINST
PRECISELY THE KIND OF LIMITED ATTACK SCENERIO DISCUSSED
LATER IN THE PAPER. THE SOVIET PLANNERS WOULD HAVE TO
TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ATTACK ON
MURMANSK WERE THEY TO TRY A LIMITED ATTACK ON A NORTH
NORWAY TARGET. IT IS THUS POSSIBLE TO ARGUE THAT THE
SOVIET BUILD UP OF STRATEGIC SYSTEMS IN THE KOLA ACTUALLY
CONTRIBUTES, PARADOXICALLY, TO STABILITY SINCE THE BUILD
UP PRESUMABLY RAISES THE THRESHHOLD LEVEL FOR LIMITED
SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE AREA.

5. WE AGREE WITH USNATO THAT A MORE LIKELY USE OF
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SOVIET MILITARY POWER IN THE NORTHERN REGION IS TO APPLY
POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON NORDOC COUNTRIES.
IT WOULD BE USEFUL, AS OUR COLLEAGUES IN BRUSSELS SUGGEST,

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TO OUTLINE SOME WAYS IN WHICH THIS MIGHT OCCUR,

BETTER TO GIVE US POLICYMAKERS IDEAS ON APPROPRIATE US RESPONSES TO SUCH PSYCHOLOGICAL BLACKMAIL.

6. FURTHER, THE PAPER MIGHT DELVE INTO POSSIBLE SOVIET OBJECTIVES IN THE NORTH. WE HAVE IN MIND BOTH MILITARY OBJECTIVES FOR AN ATTACK AND MORE IMPORTANTLY CONCEIVABLE POLITICAL OBJECTIVES - SHORT OF WAR: LIMITING OIL DEVELOPMENT NORTH OF 62 DEGREES, LIMITING ALLIED MANEUVERS IN THE AREA, LIMITING INCREASES OF NORWEGIAN FORCES IN THE NORTH, LIMITING THE KIND OF WEAPONRY AVAILABLE TO NORWEGIAN FORCES IN THE NORTH, ENCOURAGING CLOSER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES AND SOVIET COMMUNITIES, THE ESTABLISHING OF A SOVIET/NORWEGIAN QUOTE CONDOMINIUM UNQUOTE FOR THE NORTHERN AREA, DILUTING THREAT PERCEPTIONS, ENCROACHING ON THE NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY, ON SVALBARD OF COURSE BUT ALSO ON NORTHERN NORWEGIAN WATERS (BARENTS SEA DEMARCATION LINE TALKS, FISHERY ZONE AGREEMENTS ETC). THERE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY OTHER SOVIET OPTIONS, TOO.

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II. THE MILITARY SITUATION

7. THE PAPER ADVANCES THE THESIS THAT WESTERN PLANNERS AND ANALYSTS HAVE TENDED TO OVERSTATE THE THREAT POSED BY THE SOVIET FORCES IN THE NORTH. HOWEVER AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE THAT THE ASSETS AVAILABLE TO THE RUSSIANS IN THE MURMANSK AREA AND FARTHER SOUTH IN THE LENINGRAD MILITARY DISTRICT ARE PERFECTLY ADEQUATE FOR THE KIND OF LIMITED ATTACK SCENARIO THAT THE PAPER POSES. FOR INSTANCE EXAMINING THE ASSETS THAT COULD BE DRAWN FROM THE MURMANSK AREA OR FARTHER SOUTH, WE FIND: A NEARLY FULL STRENGTH MRD (MURMANSK) ANOTHER NEARLY FULLY STRENGTH MRD (200 KILOMETERS SOUTH AT KANDELASKA) ANOTHER NEARLY FULL STRENGTH MRD (100 KILOMETERS SOUTH AT SORTAVALA) AN AIRBORNE DIVISION AT PSKOV WHOSE RANGE EASILY INCLUDES NORWAY, A 2000 MAN NAVAL INFANTRY REGIMENT WITH TRANSPORT (AT MURMANSK) SIX OTHER MRD IN THE LENINGRAD MILITARY DISTRICT, AND A SMALL TACTICAL AIR ARMY LOCATED NEAR LENINGRAD. IT WOULD SEEM TO US THAT THE USE OF THESE FORCES AGAINST NORTHERN NORWAY HAS BEEN OVERLY DEPRECATED IN THE STUDY AND THAT FEATURES SUCH AS BAD WEATHER AND TERRAIN AND THE NEED FOR INTERNAL REINFORCEMENTS HAVE BEEN OVERDRAWN AS LIMITATIONS ON THE SOVIETS' FORCES AGAINST NORTHERN NORWAY. THESE SAME FEATURES IN FACT WOULD APPLY SIMILARLY TO ALLIED FORCES OPERATING IN THE NORTH. IN SHORT, AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE THAT THE FORCES AVAILABLE TO THE SOVIETS IN THE MURMANSK AREA ARE ADEQUATE TO MOUNT THE KIND OF SHORT WARNING LIMITED OBJECTIVE ATTACK PROPOSED BY THE STUDY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THE POSSIBLE USES OF THE AIRBORN DIVISION AT PSKOV AND

THE INTENSIVE HELIBORNE OPERATIONAL TRAINING THAT THE
LENINGRAD MILITARY DISTRICT FORCES HAVE UNDERGONE IN THE
LAST SEVERAL YEARS AS WELL AS THEIR GROWING HELICOPTER
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FLEET AND THE FACT THAT THE NAVAL RIFLE REGIMENT AT MUR-
MANSK IS STRUCTURED FOR OPERATIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA
(THE NAVAL REGIMENT HAS AMPLE CIVIL MARITIME CAPABILITY
IN MURMANSK). IT MIGHT BE WORTH NOTING THAT THE LENINGRAD
TROOPS ARE EQUIPPED WITH SPECIAL SNOW VEHICLES AND OTHER
WINTER EQUIPMENT. IN SHORT, THE PM PAPER SEEMS TO OVER-
EMPHASIZE THE DIFFICULTIES THE SOVIET FORCES IN THE MUR-
MANSK AREA AND NEARBY WOULD ENCOUNTER IN MOUNTING
A LIMITED OBJECTIVE ATTACK.

8. FURTHER TO THE REINFORCEMENT POINT, THE PM PAPER
MAKES, FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, SOME RATHER OPTIMISTIC ASSUMP-
TIONS REGARDING NORWAY'S AND THE ALLIES' ABILITY TO REINFORCE
THE NORTHERN AREA. FIRST AS FAR AS INTERNAL REINFORCEMENTS
ARE CONCERNED THE PAPER STATES THAT M DAY NORWEGIAN FORCES
IN NORTHERN NORWAY WOULD AMOUNT TO 18,000 MEN, WHICH IS
MORE THAN THE ENTIRE NORWEGIAN ARMY. AS FAR AS EXTERNAL
REINFORCEMENTS ARE CONCERNED THE STUDY SEES TOTAL INTERNAL

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NORWEGIAN MOBILIZATION (134,000 MEN), THE ACE MOBILE FORCE (4,400 MEN) THE CAST COMBAT GROUP (5,000 MEN), US MARINES (10,000 MEN) AND 6,000 OTHER US GROUND FORCE PERSONNEL FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF 149,000 IN PLACE IN NORTHERN NORWAY ON M PLUS 21. CONSIDERING THE LOGISTICAL AND TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES ALONE, THIS SEEMS TO BE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC.

9. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO BREAK THE STUDY AWAY FROM ITS RATHER STATIC APPROACH, AND BUILD IN A DYNAMIC ANALYSES OF THE COMPARATIVE REINFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES AVAILABLE TO EACH SIDE. THE CRITICAL QUESTION IN OUR VIEW, IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TIME IT TAKES THE SOVIETS TO COLLECT AND BRING TO BEAR THE FORCES IN THE WIDER AREA (AS OUTLINED IN PARA 7 ABOVE) AND THE TIME IT TAKES NORWAY AND HER ALLIES TO BRING REINFORCEMENTS TO BEAR AT THE THREATENED POINT. THIS EQUATION NEEDS WATCHING NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT DETERMINES WARNING TIME, BUT ALSO BECAUSE ANY SERIOUS IMBALANCE OR ADVERSE TREND CALLS
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INTO QUESTION THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR REINFORCEMENT STRATEGY. AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL AND PATTERN OF SOVIET EXERCISES OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS MIGHT GIVE SOME IDEA OF HOW AND IF THE SOVIETS SEEM TO USE REINFORCEMENTS.
III. SCENARIOS.

10. TURNING TO THE SCENARIOS POSED IN THE STUDY, IT IS OUR FEELING THAT THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND GAINS FOR THE SOVIETS SHOULD BE LOOKED AT A LITTLE MORE CLOSELY. THE SOVIETS CANNOT ASSUME A LIMITED WAR IF THEY CHOOSE TO MOUNT A LIMITED ATTACK IN NORTHERN NORWAY; THE COMMITMENTS OF THE ALLIANCE GUARANTEE THAT IT WILL BECOME A BROADER WAR. ALSO THE POSSIBLE GAINS THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE SEEKING IN A LIMITED ATTACK NEED TO BE BETTER DEFINED. THE ATTACK SCENARIO FOR SVALBARD IS IF ANYTHING OVERLY OPTIMISTIC. IN OUR VIEW TO TAKE SVALBARD, THE SOVIETS REALLY ONLY NEED 20 MINUTES TO PUT 150 MEN FROM BARENTS-BURG ONTO THE UNDEFENDED AIR FIELD AT LONGYEARBYEN.
IV. CONCLUSIONS:

11. IN GENERAL WE BELIEVE THAT OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN NORTH NORWAY REMAINS, AS THE STUDY POINTS OUT, WHAT IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST, NAMELY TO PREVENT SOVIET ENCROACHMENT IN THE NORTHERN REGION WHILE PROTECTING OUR STRATEGIC MILITARY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THE AREA. THIS MEANS UPHOLDING A STRONG NORWEGIAN AND WESTERN POSITION VIS A VIS THE SOVIETS

BUT NOT ALARMING THE RUSSIANS TO THE EXTENT THAT TENSIONS
IN THE NORTH RISE OR DESTABILIZING FACTORS ARE INTRODUCED.
ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES IS TO
SUPPORT A CREDITABLE ALLIED DEFENSE ON THE NORTHERN FLANK.
THEREFORE WE BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER
NATO ALLIES SHOULD KEEP UP THE PRESSURE FOR PREPOSITIONING
AND IMPROVED RECEPTION FACILITIES AS WELL AS FOR SPEEDING
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UP THE ARRIVAL OF EXTERNAL REINFORCEMENTS AND IN OUR
CASE THE DESIGNATION OF A MARINE UNIT. THE POLITICAL SIDE,
WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE NORWAY TO MAINTAIN DEFENSE SPENDING AND
SUPPORT THE GON IN NEGOTIATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE
SOVIET UNION TO ENSURE THAT IT IS NOT ISOLATED.
12. WE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE
TO THIS IMPORTANT DIALOGUE ON THE NORTHERN FLANK AND TO READ THE
THOUGHTFUL COMMENTS FROM OUR COLLEAGUES IN NORDIC
CAPITALS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO FUTURE ITERATIONS.
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